

McGill Daily **Culture**

volume 86 • number 46

January 30 — February 5, 1997

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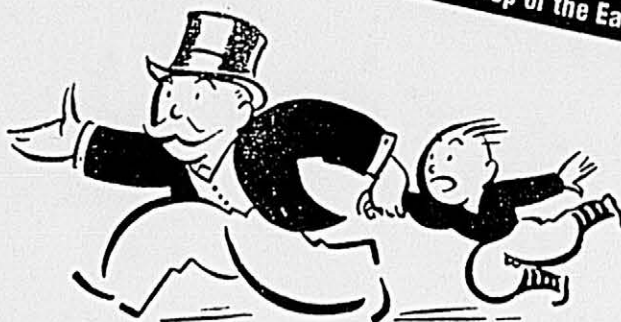
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EVENTS

Thursday, January 30

• Network for Youth in Community Economics presents "An Introduction to Community Economic Development," 18h00, Wendy Patrick Room, Wilson Hall. Info: 398-7411.

• Black Students Network presents a law professor from the University of Toronto. Discussion of strategies concerning how Black students from McGill can get into the field of law, 17h30-19h00. Shatner room 425/426.

Friday, January 31

• The Yellow Door presents Terry Joe and his banjo and The Bandwagon with Dave Schneider and Mike Evin. Admission \$3, 20h00.

Tuesday, February 4

• The Montreal YWCA offers a business course on how to start your own business, effective advertising and other related matters. Registration of individual sessions or the whole course. Info: Donna Morris 866-9941 ext. 219.

February 6-8, 13-15

• Tuesday Night Café presents This is for you, Anna, Morrice Hall, 20h00. Admission \$6 students and seniors, \$8 adults. Tickets 398-6600.

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On the shoulder of the millenium

Gates and West discuss *The Future of the Race*

by Nicholas Boston

...literature

We are on the eve of yet another Black History Month, that self-conscious celebration of African identity in all its permutations. Here on the pages of the Daily, as in other pockets of the collective consciousness of McGill University, minds are turning afresh to questions that provoke and preoccupy people on the proverbial "outside" on a daily basis. Communities and individuals of African descent, primarily those situated in North America, think, feel, and engage constant challenges to their understanding of what it means to be Black—if, of course, such a thing even exists outside the contrived scrutinies of politics, economics, gender, sexuality, academics, immigration, conformity, and struggle. The ostensible purpose, therefore, of naming the month of February "Black History Month" is to concentrate on the knowledge we, as inheritors of a specific history and discrete circumstances, can use towards forging a transformative future.

The book *The Future of the Race* by Henry Louis Gates Jr. and Cornel West proposes such a challenge—to find avenues through which past inequalities might lead forth onto empowering horizons. The book, co-authored by two of

America's so-called intellectual giants of African-American Studies, is a meditation on the resonances of W.E.B. DuBois' essay from 1903 entitled "The Talented Tenth". In that piece, DuBois theorizes that "the Negro Race, like all races, is going to be saved by its exceptional men." For this very pronouncement, and the problematics it necessarily foregrounds around gender, class, and a host of other subject positions, "The Talented Tenth" has remained one of the most widely debated essays, both fiercely denounced and lovingly appropriated into the canon of twentieth century writings on Black liberationist politics.

Gates and West are therefore only the most recent thinkers to add their insights to a vast knowledge base comprised of Black women and men, people located on the political left and

right, feminists, members of the working poor, Marxists, theoreticians of queer identity, scholars and anti-academics alike. Though the title of their book might stand to suggest a monolithic community, and despite the overdetermined accent Gates and West place on the opinions and experiences of their colleagues at Harvard University where they are both professors, the truth is that Black identity slips and slides evenly across multiple points of interest and multiple subjective realities.

The Future of the Race begins with two essays, one by each of the authors, that offer personal accounts of their understandings of W.E.B. DuBois' essay and its relevance for Black empowerment here on the shoulder of the millenium. Gates is the first to speak. In rather class-conscious terms he talks about his movement from rural West Virginia to the halls of privilege as an undergraduate at Yale University. Through the frame of this narrative, Gates attempts to come to terms with the gap that persists between middle-class African-Americans and the more sizable Black underclass left to languish in the shadows of America's capitalist dreams and aspirations. Gates recognizes the inherent contradictions of his positioning, of being Black at Yale and later Harvard, but hastens to question the terms on which those contradictions are made to function. Ultimately, Gates leaves his readers with this sentiment: "Only sometimes do I feel guilty that I was one of the lucky ones, and only sometimes do I ask myself why."

Cornel West is far less existential in his musings. His essay is a scholarly reflection on the legacy of DuBois' early twentieth century manifesto. It is a work packed with cunning and resourceful references to literature and philosophy, all tied together with a flavour of West's own analytical framework, theology. It is a lengthier essay than Gates', and one that goes far beyond private recollections and bourgeois sentimentality. West refuses to either valorize or denigrate DuBois, electing instead to give us a thorough reading of the formulations, social and historical, that informed DuBois' speculations on such categories as "crisis", "allegiance", and "uplift". Reading West's essay, one gets a clearer



HENRY LOUIS GATES JR.

sense of what a communitarian ethic could mean for a body of people divided by class, compromised by economics, and determined by faith.

The Future of the Race is by no means what its

back cover announces it to be: "a visionary work that is sure to be read and debated as long as race remains an issue in America." It is a book that snags at the seams and bunches in the middle of one of America's most tight fitting straight jackets. But in the cold climes of a February look-back, it succeeds in cloaking us in the philosophical embrace of its twilight strivings.

The Future of the Race is published by Vintage Books and is available now.



CORNELL WEST

Two-thirds for the price of one

Mainly Montréal is kind of Montréal

by Noémi Tousignant

Mainly Montréal, currently playing at the Centaur Theatre, is described in its program as a "three-part evening of theatre by Montrealers, about Montrealers..." To that, you could add "anglo," but this is the only evidence of a unifying thread running through the evening's parts. I am uncertain whether the Montréal theme was simply meant to justify sticking these oddly assorted plays side by side, or whether it was intended as a ploy to lure Montrealers to the performance, thinking it would be about them. Regardless, the show communicates a sense of the diversity and disjointedness of Montréal's anglophone communities.

Despite its lack of coherence as a whole, *Mainly Montréal* is not devoid of talent. Vittorio Rossi's "Little Blood Brother" and David Fennario's "Gargoyles" both offer interesting and intimate glimpses into two tightly knit anglophone communities which are probably unfamiliar to a large part of the audience.

Little Blood Brother is a discomfort-causing one-act play centered around a Saturday night conversation between three macho Italian youths. One of the men, a star hockey player, is obviously traumatized by some recent event. The audience is daunted by the feeling that something terrible has happened as the men get caught in accelerating circular dialogues filled with opaque intimations. The scene culminates in an awkward game of macho trust and fragile intimacy, as it finally transpires that the hockey player's best friend, his blood brother, has made a pass at him in the shower. This incident appears as an infiltration into their community, as something which belongs to a different group of people, in a different part of the city. Rossi also plays on the juxtaposition of communities by stressing the mixed background of the hockey player character.

Gargoyles marks the return of David Fennario to the Centaur after a five year absence from the stage. Playing himself, Fennario takes the audience through a collage of folkloric and obscured bits of history from his na-

tive Point St-Charles/Verdun area. This history is the one which only stone gargoyles, perched up where roof and façade meet, have witnessed and remember.

Fennario's keen ear for folklore and knack for storytelling give him a casual tone, without the pretentious aspects of an extensive acting background. This history stresses the dichotomy between what was once the most affluent neighbourhood of the country, Westmount, and Montréal's poorest neighbourhood, on the other side of the tracks, Verdun/Pt. St-Charles. Yet, Fennario manages to maintain a tone that is without bitterness, and he makes no inappropriate attacks on the big bad exploiters.

Bowser and Blue, whose *Spirit of the Centaur* closed the evening, lack any trace of this kind of finesse. There seems to be some kind of unwritten law that says that as long as discrimination is carried out over a spectrum of target groups, then the audience should be allowed to laugh. Bowser and Blue's mandate seems to imply that as long as one uses self-deprecating humour, then one automatically acquires a License to be Tasteless. Honestly, this musically crude, poorly rehearsed and completely insensitive style made me very uncomfortable. Very few others seemed to find it disconcerting, so perhaps I am easily offended or missed some of the finer aspects of this pretentious performance.

In retrospect, *Little Blood Brother* ages well in memory, and *Gargoyles* has left me with the promise to myself to go wander around in "The Point" as soon as a warm and sunny Sunday afternoon should come along. But Bowser and Blue's *Spirit of the Centaur* has cast an inescapable shadow over my recollection of *Mainly Montréal*. Only if you can afford the extravagance of getting two thirds for the price of a three-part evening, could I, in good conscience, recommend *Mainly Montréal* to a discriminating audience.

Mainly Montréal is currently playing at the Centaur Theatre Company, 453 St. François-Xavier, Old Montréal. The performance plays until February 23.

The McGill Daily Culture

volume 86
number 46

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The Daily is a founding member of Canadian University Press and Presse étudiante du Québec.

Printed on 20% Recycled Paper.
ISSN 1192-4608

How to meet guys, accessorize

by Rebecca McKechnie

Do you wonder "Who guys really want to date?" Dying to find out "Why guys lie to you" — or how about "Why he's not all over you?" These are among the questions burning on the minds of young teenage girls — at least according to the headlines of mainstream teen mags such as YM (Young and Modern), Seventeen and Sassy.

The effect of glossy teen rhetoric on young women's self-esteem, image and identity is a contentious issue. But judging by their numbers and sustaining popularity, editors claim they are just fulfilling a market niche.

For example, YM's reader response mail is substantial, and Associate Editor of Articles and Features Christina Bole at YM contends that they take their readership very seriously. YM also conducts focus groups to find out what their readers are thinking, though Bole admits that they "do not have as many focus groups as they would like."

It would be easy to dismiss Bole's suggestion that the formula of fashion-

to say. They would stay up late reading them and discussing their respective experiences with boys, friends and families.

Teen magazines are one of the few available forums for young women which claim to address issues which affect them. They provide a common point of reference for young women from which they can relate their experience — the problem is that too often their actual experience isn't reflected in the articles of these magazines.

Mainstream teen magazines run the risk of becoming prescriptive instead of descriptive. They advocate a certain prototype of the young female who buys into a commercial culture. For a young reader, who is developing her identity, publications which blatantly measure success in terms of popularity and how many boys call, can be destructive to one's self-esteem.

They both reach and define girl's insecurities by promoting the commercialized ideal female, who is created according to strict criteria. She embodies "the look" and also an existence. Girls are taught to be aspiring beauties, focused on aesthetics more than anything else. The values emphasized seem to be in favor of perpetuating a socially archaic message to females.

Say anything

I came across an article in a back issue of YM that asked "guys" why they have a roving eye. They picture a selection of males questioned on a college campus, with their responses written below. My mouth dropped when I read one answer. It read, "You're always vying for a better-looking woman. You have to be careful whom you choose. You don't want her to get fat." In another issue of YM, they asked a group of males what they would choose, brains or beauty in a female. "Beauty," one respondent said, "I've got enough brains for the two of us."

It is ironic that in a publication meant for females, the woman's voice is present only as a passive force. Women are meant to care about the responses of men more than women. The naïve and insecure female asks the questions, and keenly takes note of the answer, of who exactly she is supposed to be.

The message for young women? Be thin, beautiful and hide your intelligence — then just maybe you'll get the ultimate prize of a boyfriend. But remember girls — if you're not careful, he might leave you for someone else.

Bole suggests that the editor at the time of these publications did not simply overlook the inclusion of these responses, but printed them to show that there are "jerks out there."

As if this needed reinforcement.

Bole claims that YM is meant to be a "fun" publication for their audience, females age 14 to 21. "It's a fun read and a good escape" she says. She responds to criticism of YM's content as "generalizing." "It's not just about guys and looking good," she maintains; YM also deals with "real life."

First person features deal with crisis issues such as drug abuse or eating disorders. As well, the magazine has helpful articles about SATs, volunteering, and employment. YM keeps "communication open," encouraging young girls to be "the best person they can be," she contends.

However, Bole also believes readers are intelligent enough not to take YM's coverage too seriously. But when the sections of the magazine are divided into "Fashion," "Beauty," and "Guys," it becomes difficult to skirt the fact that girls' insecurities are being played upon and at the same time being con-

Teen magazines are one of the few available forums for young women which claim to address issues which affect them. They provide a common point of reference for young women from which they can relate their experience — the problem is that too often their actual experience isn't reflected in the articles of the magazines.

structed.

The teen mag formula which emphasizes beauty over intelligence has evolved through the cozy politics that exist between advertisers and publishers. Advertisements for beauty products run alongside photos and articles which first convince the reader that a certain type of appearance is desirable. Flip the page and the reader is confronted with an ad marketing the lipstick or eyeliner which claim to make it all possible.

Editors should take responsibility for the images and views they promote in their publications. However, this task is not simply an editorial decision. Magazines receive the majority of their revenue from advertisers, not from the cover price. Consequently, the relationship between advertisers and publishers

The editors and advertisers behind conventional teen mags might scoff at the idea that there is actually a market for intelligent magazines which challenge the status quo. Some young women, however, have taken matters into their own hands, creating girl magazines written for girls, by girls.

is symbiotic.

Sassy magazine was at one time a conscientious publication, featuring models from diverse backgrounds, topics like sexual orientation and vegetarianism, and articles such as an exposé on "fat camps." It was created from an Australian magazine and started under the editorial guidance of Jane Pratt — who now has an MTV show in the works. However, Pratt struggled against Sassy's publishers, who bowed to pressure from advertisers and deemed her approach too risky. Eventually Pratt abandoned the magazine.

In its present incarnation, under the ownership of Teen magazine, Sassy is virtually unrecognizable.

The latest fashion

The editors and advertisers behind conventional teen mags might scoff at the idea that there is actually a market for intelligent magazines that challenge the status quo. Some young women, however, have taken matters into their own hands, creating girl magazines written for girls, by girls.

Sharlene Azam, founder of Reluctant Hero, a magazine written by girls, ages 13 to 16, was told by publishers that "the formula is sex, guys and fashion," and that without these elements, her magazine would not succeed. But Azam is determined to defy the mainstream criteria for adolescent magazines. She saw the need for something girls could be involved in and found other publications to be "detrimental to girls' self-esteem."

After visiting schools and talking with

"I would choose beauty. You can see the beauty, you can't always see the brains." — Brian Navic



KEVIN

The magazines focus on boys and being skinny, and eventually this is the only message they hear about what it means to be a girl. These girls have the power to create instead of just buying into something — Sharlene Azam Founder, Reluctant Hero

nailed teenage girls who had the same magazines strewn across their bunks — saturated with celebrity pinups and preaching the latest trends.

Some of the young women were very interested in what these magazines had

and lose 10 lbs before prom

Teen rags, their rhetoric and the new alternatives



young girls, Azam was "bowled over by their intelligence, and enthusiasm." She observed that the magazines they read focused on "boys and being skinny."

"Eventually," Azam explains, "this is the only message they hear about what it means to be a girl. These girls have the power to create instead of just buying into something." Azam emphasizes the use of a girl's mind and hands, and sees Reluctant Hero as epitomizing Sir Walter Scott's words, "The will to do the soul to dare."

She explains the inspiration of the magazine's title, "It is a tribute to Joseph Campbell who believed that as the hero of our own journey we should 'follow our bliss'. Every journey is full of tests and diversions. Along the way to finding out who we are and who we are to become, many of us will be reluctant to heed the call to follow our passion. By learning more about each other and ourselves, we will develop the self confidence and openness to heed the call to adventure."

But the ability of publications such as Reluctant Hero to actually reach girls are undermined by hefty distribution costs. Distribution costs are 50 per cent of the cover price, which leads to a reliance on advertising.

It's a catch 22 — as editors try to offer an alternative to magazines filled with product and image marketing, they are confronted with the problems of financing. Consequently,

Readers themselves are often ambivalent about the pleasure mixed up with anxiety that [magazines] provide. I buy them, a young women told me, as a form of self-abuse. They give me a weird mixture of anticipation and dread, a sort of stirred-up euphoria. Yes! Wow! I can be better starting from right this minute! Look at her! Look at her! But right afterward, I feel like throwing out all my clothes and everything in my refrigerator and telling my boyfriend never to call me again and blowtorching my whole life. I'm ashamed to admit that I read them every month.

— Naomi Wolf, *The Beauty Myth*

is on the increase. Just click onto the Internet and this fact is confirmed.

Their life span, however, is another factor.

Hues (Hear Us Emerging Sisters) magazine, out of Michigan, is fortunate enough to be in its sixth year of production. Hues was created by three college students who wanted to promote "self-esteem of women of all shapes, sizes, cultures, sexual orientations and economic backgrounds," according to Ophira Edut, one of the magazine's founders.

Edut says that with her sister Tali, and friend Dyann Logwood, she realized that "magazines were not going to change," so they decided to create an alternative voice. Hues is geared to women aged 18-35, and distributed on several university campuses in the United States. Thus, they are competing in an even larger market than Reluctant Hero. The articles are often humorous, with layouts such as 'Road trip' or 'PMS' fashions. As well, Hues chooses to focus on "letting women tell the world who they are, and showing different cultures which represent themselves".

Edut acknowledges the difficulties of locating funding support for alternative publications; there is a certain belief that "smart women don't sell." Edut states that Hues has had to find educational and conscious adver-

tisers to sustain their publication.

As a former intern at Sassy, Edut sees teen magazines as "attacking the insecurities of young girls." The popularity of mainstream magazines, she says, is due to a general "fascination with beautiful people." However, Edut points out that we "never got where we are with our looks. It's important that the focus becomes our minds." Edut perceives these magazines as "telling girls who to be. There is harm on their self-esteem in this fantasy." Fantasy, at times is healthy, she admits, but there should be a "balance."

New medium. New message?

While alternative print media targeted at young women may be difficult to come by, the Internet has an endless variety of e-zines. Some are fairly original, Teen Generation, found at www.tgmag.ca, is "Canada's only weekly teen Internet magazine." This format is cheaper, faster, and easier to access. It has also proven to be of great benefit for Canadian publications, which have in the past proven to be short-lived.

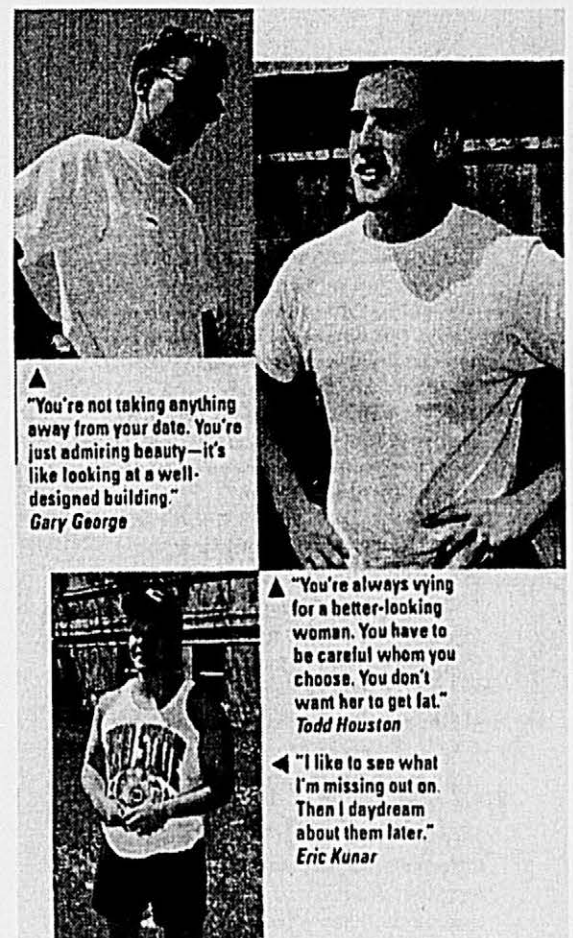
TG, unlike teen fashion and beauty mags, is a bilingual site with articles written by students. It offers articles on the environment and multiculturalism, and asks for input on its young women's guide. Visitors can check out the different neighborhoods in Toronto, and sort through an extensive selection of maps, pictures, and articles which explain the cultural make-up of the city.

TG's Young Women's Guide is based on recommendations from the Youth Caucus of the Fourth World Conference on Women. It is still in the works, but will examine issues facing young women in Canada and around the world. Their stated goal is "to give young women a space of our own to speak about our experiences and teach others." They also seek to demystify the UN so that more young people will become involved.

Ultimately, this project is "a resource that will prepare young women and men to become active participants in our own communities and to make changes that will affect and shape the world," according to editor Mark Bishop.

Although YM has yet to reach the web, there are many sites with its formula of sex, guys and beauty. It is easy to be deceived when reading the descriptions of certain sites. For instance, 'Let's Talk About Me' is said to be the "girl's interactive handbook for the twenty-first century." It is geared for girls ages 10 to 14. But according to the site, the only inter-

ests of a young woman in the 21st century involve creating your dream wardrobe in your virtual closet, and personalizing your interactive eating planner. Tips for staying fit, and horoscopes seem to be standard offerings as



▲ "You're not taking anything away from your date. You're just admiring beauty—it's like looking at a well-designed building."
Gary George

▲ "You're always vying for a better-looking woman. You have to be careful whom you choose. You don't want her to get fat."
Todd Houston

▲ "I like to see what I'm missing out on. Then I daydream about them later."
Eric Kunar

well. Advertisers have not missed a beat. Troom, at www.troom.com has a link to the Tampax NETWORK.

There are some healthy alternatives, such as BushScene, which is maintained by students in Australia. It offers short stories, poetry, reviews and news on the environment. One can also find out about publications accessible by mail (such as Teen Voices Magazine from Boston), and magazines available in Spanish, French and English. It "seeks to empower teenage girls by publishing their

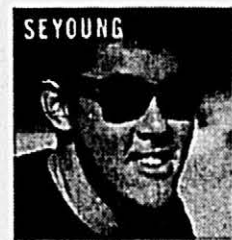
"I'm out on the tennis courts all day and my skin gets dry. So I use Oil of Olay. You're never too young to start"

voices, and encouraging girls to have respect for themselves."

As the medium for teen magazines is changing, so is the message. The young reader is able to express oneself with a pro-active voice, defying the myth of a constructed individual with limited interests. Moreover, magazines are reaching a more diverse cross-section of youths, who are stating their identity rather than buying into one.



"Beauty. I've got enough brains for the two of us." — Franz Busse



"Beauty at my age and brains later on." — Kevin Corgan

"I'd have to say brains. Beauty costs too much." — Seyoung Sohn

they relay on word of mouth, and as much publicity as they can get to become known. They can't publish as frequently and are forced to distribute through mail subscriptions.

The number of new magazines, however,

HAPPENING

Give me more
funny !!!



McGill Improv's 24-hour marathon, February 5 and 6

What annual McGill event can boast of having a nine year history, sleep-deprived students yipped up on caffeine and donuts, and a past random appearance by Jean Charest? No, it's not another Poli-Sci wine and cheese (but it's almost as good).

On February 5 and 6, all eight of McGill Improv's players will once again give 24 hours of their lives to non-stop improv. The annual event is a benefit for the McGill Sexual Assault Centre, with all donations from the event going to the Centre.

Jeff Oliver, one of the Improv players coordinating the event, says that the event has always been a success and that students "are usually pretty good about the donations. A lot of them give a bit more to thank us for doing this for free every week."

McGill Improv performs every Wednesday night at the Alley, beginning at 20h30. Oliver characterizes their improv as "sort of like 'theatre sports' — it all depends on audience participation. It's a completely interactive event. Great involvement from the audience makes great improv."

This Wednesday, the action continues past the Alley's closing time when the whole thing moves, mid-sentence, to the Player's Theatre. When the Alley re-opens the next morning, McGill Improv will move back in for another 10 hours of entertainment.

Everyone is encouraged to spend the night. "You should hear what people say at 4 a.m.," says Oliver. And while pure observation is perfectly acceptable, jumping in to help out is also very welcomed.

Just how is it that they can keep going? "I guess coffee has something to do with it, but it's such a rush that it's not at all hard to keep going" says Oliver. And Jean Charest — how did that happen? "Yeah, that was like this crazy improv dream come true. He just happened to be in the Alley during our marathon a few years ago so we pulled him up on stage."

According to the McGill Sexual Assault Centre's Barbara Timmons, "We consider it a wonderful sacrifice that they [the McGill Improv] do for the Centre. They consider it fun." Finally, an outlet that actually encourages cabin-fever induced madness to be released for the benefit of others.

— Sarah Johnson

The McGill 24 hour Improv Centre is happenin' at the Alley until closing, then at the Player's Theatre (both are in Sbatner). Admission is free, but donations to the McGill Sexual Assault Centre will be gladly accepted.

Wegman's fairy dogmother tails

Musée d'art contemporain goes to the doghouse

by Lela Kouyoumdjian

William Wegman is an American artist who has developed a remarkable body of work since the 1960s, making use of such varied mediums as painting, drawing, video and photography. The Musée d'art contemporain has currently initiated Canada's first showing of his latest photographic works entitled, "Fay's Fairy Tales."

Although the display at the museum is geared to capture the attention of young visitors, Wegman's superior imaginative and technical qualities intrigue and amuse a diverse audience. For many Montrealers, the attraction of this show is the museum's first exhibition devoted to Wegman. For others, the excitement is Wegman's choice of models: Fay Rae and Battina, two Weimaramer Pointer dummies.

The exhibit consists of giant Polaroids which express bizarre and humorous interpretations of two popular fairy tales, *Cinderella* and *Little Red Riding Hood*. The coloured photographs unfold to recreate 30 key scenes in the fairy tales. The characteristic doleful expressions of the Weimaramer Pointers enable anthropomorphic adaptations which enhance the magical images in *Fay's Fairy Tales*. The dogs pose in gowns, wigs and

jewellery, using these lavish accessories to narrate key scenes in the tales. Cinderella irons, vacuums and gets taken away in a pumpkin and Little Red Riding Hood sets off into the forest to visit her grandmother.

At the opening evening of the exhibition the artist discussed his work, while autographing published versions of the photos. Struck by the physical difficulty of the poses, I was amazed to find out that there was no computer imaging. Wegman pointed to the assistance from technicians who are, according to him, "often visible along the peripheral of the frames."

Wegman's luck in having the "right dogs" simplified the portrayal of the fairy tales. He confided that Cinderella's harsh relationship with the evil stepmother "was an exaggerated version of the real mother-daughter relationship between Fay Rae and Battina." He thought that Fay Rae would also play a convincing wolf/disguised grandmother.

The result of Wegman's photos are both striking and ridiculous. Wegman's themes are self-interpretive, from the dangers of going into the woods alone to the perils of dawn-



ing sexuality. His sense of Cinderella as a character who "lived dreaming," and as "a victim who was scolded, blessed and adopted," translated into the twisted visual effect of a Cinderella without arms. This contrived disjunction at once physical and psychological, is a tool for irony and a source for fairy tale fantasies.

By using "well known fairy tales" Wegman felt comfortable toying with images and themes, expressing his desire to disrupt any

CD Reviews

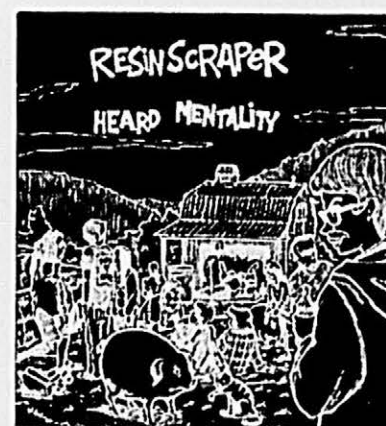
John Lee Hooker — Jealous (Pointblank/Virgin)

Pick up almost any John Lee Hooker album, and you'll be confronted by the pained expression on Hooker's face that is invariably featured on the cover. With album titles like *Alone*, *Jealous* and, my personal favourite, *I'll never get out of these blues alive*, Hooker tackles classic blues themes like lost love, alcoholism, loneliness and death with a haunting voice, a piercing guitar style and a relentless beat.

Jealous, a 1986 recording recently re-issued on CD, is a mixed bag. On some songs, there are elements of the driven haunting blues style that have made Hooker famous, but on other tracks, Hooker falls short. However, tunes like "When My First Wife Left Me" and "We'll Meet Again" show Hooker at his best, wailing in the classic folk blues tradition, with Deacon Jones' gospel/blues-inspired organ work providing suitable contrast.

On songs like "Jealous" and "Ninety Days," however, Hooker's performance is cheapened by the surrounding horn section, backup singers and synthesizers. Having been made in the mid-'80s, this musical kitschiness can probably be blamed on the influence of the decadent pop music scene of the time. In any case, *Jealous* is a good album but not one of Hooker's best, perhaps explaining why it took so long for the album to be re-issued. *Jealous* is a must-have for any hardcore Hooker fan, but can be passed up by those just 'getting into' him. Boogie fans take heart, however — Hooker is expected to release a brand new album in '97.

— Gil Shochat



Resin Scaper — Heard Mentality (Mag Wheel)

Having come from a little town in nowhere Alberta, the self-conscious backwoods themes on *Heard Mentality* are both familiar and stereotypical to me. Which is not to say that the album is neither compelling nor innovative: for those interested in concrete

sense of tradition, art history and personal attachments. Although the artist's silent narration may be translated as subversive, light hearted and humorous elements engage the spectator, providing a worthwhile and playful distraction from our own banalities.

The Musée d'art contemporain de Montreal is located at 185 St. Catherine Street West and after 6 P.M. on Wednesdays admission is free. The exhibit continues until March 16.

comparisons, think the Supersuckers meet Killdozer and tour with any SoCal band — but throw in a maple leaf, 'cause the unmistakable mark of Ottawa-area pop-punk is a definite factor here.

"More blues-inspired punk?" I hear you say, as if you figured that everyone had given that up for dub and electronica. Sure, and why not: every time the wonders of technology are rediscovered, some people have still picked up guitars instead of wires and analogue bleepers. (OK, and some of them even combined guitars and electronics, but let's not get into that here)

Overall, I think the saving grace for this album, which could have fallen to the pitfalls of modern rock, is the fact that it manages to update the whole rockabilly punk blues thing without resorting to technological artifice or arrogant roots-naming, scene-making schmuckery. Honest "country" themes embedded in well-crafted stop-start pop-punk tunes — albeit maybe a little too ironically self-conscious — are almost always successful with me. Moreover, the production on this album is just ducky. It doesn't intrude on the grittiness of the songs themselves, yet doesn't leave a saccharine feeling of overproduction. This may not be the "coolest" album that you pull out to impress your metropolitan friends, but you might be surprised at the regularity with which you grab for this album. I was.

— Jay McCoy

Starkicker - Beach Music (Sony)

Coming from Canada's sunbelt area of southern Ontario, Starkicker arrives as a relief from those drab, all too serious Toronto bands. *Beach Music*? It's an odd sounding title for a Canadian effort, but we forget that Southern Ontario was best known for its lakeside resort amenities before developers made a mess of it. Hence, the attempt of these Saint Catherine boys to capture the beach mood and 'tude is refreshing. Accordingly, sugar pop is served up in a format that is supposed to evoke the Beach Boys but translates into something closer to Wilson Phillips backed up by the Gin Blossoms — with male vocals.

Starkicker spins a formula that sounds like the small town they come from; songs like "Pick Up Truck" and "Merry Go Round" are simple ditties about kicking around and having fun. Aside from some lyrical no-nos (Pick up truck/I've fallen and I can't get up), Starkicker goes down easy like tonic for the ears.

Curiously, Starkicker still exhibits a creeping obsession that Canadian bands have with the success and image associated with the south, a notion that appears in the song "California's Cool." Maybe we're too blinded by the winter sun to see and hear that Canada's stuff ain't bad either.

— Mike Cullen

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